



# Drink Up!

So, how do you know how much fluid is enough when you exercise? A good rule of thumb is to drink during activities only when you feel thirsty. The only exception would be for people with poorly-controlled diabetes since recent studies have shown that they may have an elevated thirst threshold (meaning that they don't feel thirsty when they should), even when dehydrated; in that case, start drinking when you have sweated some.

You should never gain weight during a physical activity; in fact, you should be sweating and actually losing some weight (albeit temporarily). To know how much of this lost fluid to replace, weigh yourself before and after a prolonged activity, and only replace that amount (1 litre of water weighs 1 kilogram, or 2.2 pounds). If you have consumed a lot of fluid during an activity, wait until you start to urinate before drinking any more.

## What to Drink

As for whether you should drink water, sports drinks, or other fluids to rehydrate, it depends on your needs. For shorter activities (lasting an hour or less), plain water is fine, unless you need some extra carbohydrate to prevent low blood sugar. Sports drinks can be used, but watch carbohydrate intake (as most contain 6 to 9 grams of carbs per 8 ounces).

Don't worry about replacing electrolytes, like sodium, potassium, and chloride, unless you are exercising outdoors in hot weather for more than two hours at a time; even then, it's fine to wait to replace electrolytes naturally with your food later on.

If you prefer your fluids with some flavour, try flavoured waters, calorie-free sports drinks. If you need to rehydrate and treat a low blood sugar, try a regular sports drink, sugary soda, or diluted fruit juice.

## Staying Cool

To avoid overheating, try exercising at a cooler time of day. Ten to two o'clock offer the sun's most direct rays, and you will gain more heat simply from its radiant energy.

If you cannot avoid the sun, wear white or light-coloured clothing that reflects more rays, and always wear a shirt as your skin (regardless of its color) absorbs more radiant energy than light-colored clothing. Wear loose fitting clothes that allow air to circulate between the material and your skin.

Most importantly, if you ever start feeling too hot or experience any other symptoms of heat stress – such as nausea, dizziness, extreme thirst, or disorientation – find a place to sit down out of the sun (in some shade or indoors), drink some cool fluids, place ice around your neck, or consider wetting yourself down with cool water to cool off. While mild heat stress will pass, heat stroke is a serious medical emergency requiring immediate action to cool your body down to prevent coma or death.

Finally, give yourself about two weeks to fully adjust to exercising in the heat. Start out by exercising outdoors at cooler times of day and at a lower intensity. Once acclimatised, your body will actually sweat sooner and more than before, allowing you to cool down more effectively. If you do not like to sweat, then your best bet is to find a nice place to exercise indoors in the air conditioning during the hot summer months!

For more information on all of the mental benefits of physical activity, you can read *The 7 Step Diabetes Fitness Plan: Living Well and Being Fit with Diabetes, No Matter Your Weight* or check out this website: [www.shericolberg.com](http://www.shericolberg.com)

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